

Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee

Meeting minutes

March 26th @ 6:00 pm

Mt. Hood Room – City Hall

Call to Order and Roll Call

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM on Thursday, March 26th, 2026. Roll call was conducted by Kori Buth with the following members present: Karen Buehrig, Tim Lainhart, Erin McClellan, Kevin Cayson, Emily Lisborg (online), and Melissa Deyoe (online).

Public Comments

No public comments were received.

Approval of Minutes

Motion: Erin McClellan moved to approve the minutes from January 22nd and February 26th, 2026.

Karen Buehrig seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Public Works ADA Transition Plan

Assistant City Manager, Alex Troutman, and Assistant City Engineer, Josh Wheeler, presented the ADA Transition Plan for the public right of way. They explained that an ADA Transition Plan is a Master Plan that evaluates ADA services, policies, and practices while prioritizing implementation of upgrades over time. The plan is required under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 for public entities with 50 or more employees.

The presentation focused specifically on the public right of way portion, which covers items adjacent to parks and other areas. The City has 3,368 ramps total, with 3,026 in the City's right of way. Nearly 60% of inspected ramps are noncompliant, with an estimated 1,800 requiring reconstruction. Inspections proceed at about 20 per month, which will take approximately 7 years to complete assessment of all ramps.

Josh explained the prioritization system based on federal law: state and local government public uses are priority one, central community services are priority two, and single family neighborhoods are priority three. Each ramp reconstruction costs approximately \$10,000 plus design costs, allowing the City to complete only 10-20 ramps annually. Based on current funding levels of \$100,000-\$200,000 per year, it would take nearly 90 years to achieve full compliance.

Karen Buehrig asked whether the 10-20 annual ramps were separate from those completed through other PMUF projects. Josh clarified that most ramps are done through the pavement maintenance program, with additional ramps completed through private development and capital improvement projects.

Karen also inquired about setting aside dedicated funding specifically for priority-driven ramp improvements. Josh indicated this question would likely be raised during City Commission adoption meetings.

Tim Lainhart asked about coordination with parks projects, and Alex noted that a City-wide transition plan is being developed through an upcoming RFP process that will examine all City departments and programs more comprehensively.

Introduction of Management Team

Tom Kissinger introduced the management team members present at the meeting.

Cecily Rose, Social Service and Community Center Manager, reported that the Pioneer Center is in its closure week for maintenance projects, including new ADA-compliant slider doors funded by a Metro enhancement grant. In the past year, the center provided 47,753 meals, with over 38,000 through the Meals on Wheels program serving both Oregon City and West Linn residents. The transportation program provided nearly 7,000 one-way rides using four vehicles and three drivers. The Center averages 4,500 documented visits monthly and offers various programs including line dancing, bingo, and fall prevention classes. Cecily manages 12 additional staff members and oversees City events including Fall Fest, Fourth of July, and Concerts in the Park.

Melissa Sebastian, Aquatic and Recreation Manager, has worked at the swimming pool for nearly 20 years. The facility operates six days a week from 5-6 AM to 8-9 PM, serving four swim teams and hosting recent swim meets where world records were broken by participants in their swim lesson programs. The department focuses heavily on swim lessons as drowning remains a leading cause of death for ages 0-18. They recently added a full-time aquatic program coordinator to expand teen and adult swim lessons. The recreation side offers fitness classes, camps, and junior camp counselor programs. The Frances Ermatinger House provides historical programming, with field trips serving over 1,000 children in the past two years, plus special events and tours throughout the year.

Brandon Watt, Parks and Cemetery Manager, oversees two cemeteries (Straight Cemetery and Mountain View) with dedicated cemetery grounds staff and office staff for bookings and family meetings. The Parks maintenance team of six staff members maintain 35 parks, handling mowing, trimming, ball field renovations, and general landscape maintenance while assisting other departments with event setup and support.

Committee members expressed appreciation for the comprehensive services provided by all three departments, noting the impressive numbers served and the community-building aspects of the programs.

New Parks & Recreation Guide Introduction

Tom announced the development of Oregon City's first Parks and Recreation Guide, replacing the parks content previously included in the quarterly Trail News publication. The guide will be published three times annually: a summer edition, a fall edition, and a combined spring/winter edition. The inaugural summer edition will be mailed in April to all addresses that previously received the quarterly Trail News.

Tom presented a draft mascot called "Scout the Squirrel," representing the City's squirrel population. The mascot is part of a broader effort to establish a unique Parks and Recreation brand identity. When asked about the mascot's role, Tom jokingly noted he may be the one to wear any future mascot costume.

The guide will include a Director's message, project updates, contact information for PRAC members directing inquiries through staff, and program information. A digital version will be

available on the website with archived editions. Erin McClellan suggested future editions could include PRAC member profiles or welcome letters. Tom confirmed this would be an iterative process with improvements in each edition.

Erin also asked about multiple language availability. Tom indicated this is desired for the future but current budget constraints limit the initial edition to English only.

Emerald Ash Borer Plan Review

Tom provided an update on the Emerald Ash Borer response plan, noting they have been working with Oregon Department of Forestry to acquire free tree plotter software for inventory and cost calculation. The first data set has been uploaded to ODF and will soon be publicly viewable on the tree plotter website, including all previously surveyed trees from Parks, Public Works, and Planning department data.

Tim Lainhart asked about the plan's end goal and timeline. Tom explained they are developing a response and mitigation plan covering all City departments that manage trees. This will include modifying planting lists to avoid new ash trees, response plans for at-risk trees, potential permit exemptions for ash tree removal, and replanting strategies to offset canopy loss. The main strategy is SLAM (Slow Ash Mortality) to spread die-off over time rather than experiencing sudden mass tree loss.

Kevin Cayson, drawing from previous experience with EAB, confirmed that all ash trees will eventually be lost and asked about current mitigation efforts. Tom indicated proactive removal is being considered but is currently limited by tree code requirements to demonstrate tree death before removal. Code updates may be proposed through this plan.

Emily Lisborg added information about treatment costs, toxicity concerns, and funding opportunities through FEMA for documented canopy loss mitigation. She also noted that emerald ash borer targets olive trees as well.

Emily mentioned coordination with the Natural Resources Committee on educational content for Trail News about EAB identification and reporting.

Bee City USA Policy Review

Tom noted this item continues from the previous month's discussion without new information to present. The goal is to achieve Bee City USA certification within the current biennium (by June 30, 2027) as a Commission goal. Tom scheduled individual meetings with Emily Lisborg to incorporate her previous comments and invited other members to schedule similar discussions.

Tom emphasized the need to identify sites for pollinator habitat projects, noting many potential areas were identified through the Community Choice Grants Program. Emily suggested prioritizing locations with existing irrigation infrastructure to reduce operational costs and support plant establishment.

Aquatics & EOT Conceptual Planning Update

Tom explained that both project components have begun with initial meetings and are developing community engagement plans. To maintain project timelines, staff requested that PRAC designate one member to represent the committee when reviewing smaller deliverables that don't warrant full presentations but require timely feedback.

Tim Lainhart asked about time commitment and duration. Tom estimated this would involve reading documents and providing feedback approximately every six weeks for about 30 minutes, lasting the project's estimated one-year duration. The role would primarily involve email or document sharing, with occasional meeting invitations during daytime hours for focus groups or similar activities.

Erin McClellan sought clarification on whether this representative would provide final decisions or guidance to keep the project team on track before bringing larger packages back to the full committee. Tom confirmed it was the latter - helping ensure proper direction while major decisions would still involve the full PRAC.

Motion: Tim Lainhart nominated Erin McClellan to serve as the PRAC representative for the Aquatics and EOT conceptual planning process. Kevin Cayson seconded the nomination. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Tom provided updates on recent facility tours including Lake Oswego Recreation and Aquatic Center, Conestoga Recreation Center, and Southeast Community Center in Portland, plus their own Pool facility. Common themes included the need for more storage, flexible classroom space, and consideration of building flow and entry points. Melissa Sebastian emphasized the importance of having two bodies of water for different programming needs and water temperatures. The tours highlighted various amenities and operational considerations for future planning.

Cecily Rose noted her participation in the tours from the perspective of adult fitness programming needs, observing space sizes, equipment storage solutions, and locker facilities. Kevin Cayson cautioned about fitness equipment operations, noting consultants often advise against departments operating fitness equipment due to poor return on investment and maintenance costs.

Tom clarified that the project focuses on program development first, with facility design following program needs. The goal is to understand community desires and associated costs, likely resulting in two conceptual options: a modernized version of current facilities or a larger recreation and aquatics center similar to Lake Oswego or Conestoga.

Peace Pole Project Update

Tom added an unscheduled item regarding a request from the local Rotary chapter to install a peace pole at Library Park. Leah Sundquist from Rotary Club of Oregon City explained that peace poles display "May Peace Prevail" in multiple languages, including Chinuk Wawa with Grand Ronde tribal permission. The pole requires minimal maintenance and would include a QR code linking to a worldwide peace pole registry.

The proposed location is outside the library entrance, requiring moving an existing bench and extending the sidewalk. The library staff supports the project, and the area has security camera coverage. Rotary would fund the pole and installation, requesting a small plaque or sticker acknowledging their donation.

Kevin Cayson noted experience with occasional vandalism of similar installations but indicated support. Brandon Watt confirmed the site would work well with minor modifications. Tom noted this would be handled at the staff level through a Memorandum of Understanding with standard City property rights protections.

Tom also provided updates on other projects, including Park Place Park's \$200,000 improvement budget with ongoing Neighborhood Association meetings and a survey currently available on the City website. The Wesley Lynn dog park project has been approved with

contracts in place, anticipating substantial completion by fall 2026. The Chapin playground update showed community preference for the barn design option at the recent Gaffney Lane Neighborhood Association meeting.

Erin McClellan asked about the possibility of adding the Neighborhood Association meeting times/dates as calendar reminders for PRAC members.

Member Reports

Tim Lainhart reported attending several swim meets at the pool and noted excellent cleanliness and maintenance across multiple parks over the past six months, particularly given the dry winter conditions.

Erin McClellan praised the continued improvement in social media engagement and content quality, noting increased positivity and better copywriting generating more community engagement.

Karen Buehrig participated in the tree planting event at Hillandale Park, noting good community attendance and ongoing appreciation for the Lautorette's basketball courts, which attract diverse groups of young people throughout the day.

Next Scheduled Meeting - April 23rd, 2026

The next Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for April 23rd, 2026.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned about 7:45 pm.